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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, November 15, 2006

GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR NAMED 2006 PUBLIC OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

(Jackson, Mississippi) - Governor Haley Barbour has been named the nation's most outstanding governor and a 2006 Public Official of the Year in recognition of his resourcefulness and cool-headed leadership in the face of Hurricane Katrina.

The award was given by Governing magazine, an independent, Washington, D.C.-based magazine devoted to coverage of state and local government. Governor Barbour will accept the award tonight at a dinner in Washington.

"I am honored to receive this award from Governing magazine, but Marsha and I feel it is more a tribute to the people of Mississippi because of the character, resilience, courage and selflessness they displayed after Hurricane Katrina," Governor Barbour said. "I graciously accept this award on their behalf."

Governor Barbour is profiled in the November issue of Governing for "being straight with the facts about the utter devastation in the area, but also for his own demeanor in public appearances that suggested the state would summon the will to rebuild." The profile, titled "Steady in a Storm," credits Governor Barbour for putting his state on a road to recovery, as evidenced by the prompt reopening of public schools and the unprecedented provision of temporary housing for more than 100,000 residents.

"It was because of Governor Barbour's amazing leadership that he has shown in managing the State of Mississippi after we suffered the largest natural disaster in this nation's history that compelled me to nominate him for this award," state Auditor Phil Bryant said. "No public official in America deserved this prestigious award more than our Governor, Haley Barbour."

The article also highlights Governor Barbour's erasing of a \$700 million-plus budget deficit without raising taxes, his increase of state spending on K-12 and higher education, boosting job training and economic development programs, and his successful promotion of broad policy changes, including a tort reform measure that has been hailed as one of the most successful in the nation.

This year's group of nine recipients of Public Official of the Year 2006 awards represents the thirteenth to be honored in Governing's annual awards program, which was launched in 1994.

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